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SUBJECT: UKRAINE: TYMOSHENKO PM VOTE COMES DOWN TO THE WIRE

Classified By: PolCouns Kent Logsdon for reasons 1.4(b,d).

¶1. (C) Summary. The December 11 vote on Tymoshenko's candidacy is shaping up to be a nail-biter, with three members of OU-PSD reportedly now in the hospital for various medical problems, Regions still threatening to block the rostrum, and disputes over Cabinet positions straining the coalition. Pora leader Vladyslav Kaskiv (OU-PSD), who underwent surgery this weekend, said he has requested doctor's permission to attend the Rada session, but Tymoshenko will need all 227 BYuT and OU-PSD MPs who signed the coalition agreement to be present for the vote, including the three OU-PSD MPs in the hospital, especially given OU-PSD MP and former NSDC Secretary Plyushch's continued reluctance to support her. Moreover, BYuT MP Volynets told us late on December 10 that Presidential Chief of Staff Baloha had made a number of last minute changes to the OU-PSD slate of nominees for the Cabinet, which necessitated BYuT calling for a 9 pm meeting (Kyiv time) to discuss whether Baloha's new proposals are acceptable. In a tacit acknowledgment to the fragility of the coalition, Tymoshenko continues to court the other parties in the Rada, but there is little sign that they are inclined to vote for her. End summary.

Factions Stake Out Their Positions

¶2. (C) Rada Speaker Yatsenyuk said on a December 7 talk show that he plans to hold Rada leadership votes in the morning and the PM vote in the afternoon of December 11. On December 10, Yatsenyuk reminded the press that if Tymoshenko's nomination fails the first time, Yushchenko can nominate her again, although we wonder how long she will want to put herself out there to be rejected, which could undermine her public standing. Yatsenyuk also said that if she is not confirmed, he will step down as Speaker. The President met December 10 with Yatsenyuk to discuss nominees for Foreign and Defense Minister, as well as Yushchenko's presentation of Tymoshenko as the Prime Minister-designate in the Rada. Yushchenko also met with Tymoshenko, and OU-PSD leaders Lutsenko and Kyrilenko to discuss the course of events for Tuesday.

¶3. (SBU) Regions MP Khara told the press on December 10 that Tymoshenko was conducting negotiations with Lytvyn Bloc, as well as some members of Regions in a bid to gain more support for her December 11 confirmation vote. Khara said that Regions' policy was not to vote for her, and in fact, they were currently discussing whether to blockade the rostrum or boycott the session if the Rada does not first hold votes on deputy speakers and committee leadership. BYuT deputy faction leader Kornichuk confirmed to the press that BYuT was meeting with "the useful part" of Regions. Lytvyn Bloc MP Zahrubynskiy told Ukrainska Pravda that Tymoshenko was scheduled to meet with his faction at 9 am on December 11, but that the meeting was unlikely to alter the bloc's decision not to vote for her.

¶4. (SBU) Regions deputy faction leader Chechetov later told the press that at an afternoon faction meeting on December 10, Regions reaffirmed its decision to back Communist MP Martynyuk as First Deputy Speaker -- some leading OU-PSD and BYuT MPs have criticized the choice and said they will not vote for Martynyuk. Chechetov characterized such comments as a sign of the coalition's undemocratic nature. The gathered Regions faction also voted to make Yanukovych the new faction leader, replacing Raisa Bohatyreva.

¶5. (C) Comment. Regions' continued focus on the deputy speaker vote as a prerequisite for the PM vote rings a little false given that they are the ones who have been dragging their feet on nominating someone. However, OU-PSD and BYuT could remove this roadblock by agreeing to Martynyuk, a candidate they seemingly had been willing to support a week ago when Yatsenyuk's candidacy was on the line.

¶6. (U) Visit Embassy Kyiv's classified website:
www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/kyiv.
Taylor